

Impact Evaluation on Prime Farmland

The purpose of the study is to determine if changes in TVA's reservoir system operating policies would produce greater overall public value.

Background

TVA is conducting a formal evaluation of its policies for operating the Tennessee River reservoir system, including an analysis of the economic impacts of any potential changes in these policies. Existing policies affect how reservoir levels fluctuate, when changes in reservoir levels occur, and the amount of water flowing through the reservoir system at different times of the year, depending on rainfall.

The purpose of the study is to determine if changes in TVA's reservoir system operating policies would produce greater overall public value. Technical analyses will be performed to evaluate the impacts of TVA's current policies and the potential impacts of alternatives on a number of resource areas and other issues.

The two-year Reservoir Operations Study (ROS) is scheduled for completion in October 2003.

The impacts on prime farmland will be evaluated as part of the ROS and the results will be documented in an environmental impact statement (EIS). TVA will conduct the study in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

Potential Impacts

- Prime farmland is classified as land with soils that have the chemical and physical properties to economically sustain high yields of crop production.
- This land may now be in use as cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forestland, or other uses, but cannot be urban or built-up land.
- River bottomland and floodplains of streams are generally prime farmland.
- A potential direct impact on prime farmland is increased erosion, which could result from a change in floodplain elevations.
- A potential indirect impact on prime farmland is increased development of land surrounding the reservoirs.

Geographic Areas

- The largest areas of prime farmland in the Tennessee Valley are located in the western parts of Tennessee and Alabama.

Scope of Analysis

- Acreage of prime farmland will be determined within the potential floodplains of each reservoir.
- Areas of prime farmland within one mile of full pool of each reservoir will be studied for indirect impacts of land development

For More Information

To submit comments or get additional information, members of the public are invited to visit TVA's Web site at www.tva.com, to call toll-free 888-882-7675, to fax TVA at 865-632-3146, or to write to ROS Project Manager David Nye, Tennessee Valley Authority, c/o WT 11A, 400 West Summit Hill Dr., Knoxville, TN 37902.